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ABSTRACT

There is a widely felt need to do something in education about the moral wasteland of contemporary American society. It is appropriate for English teachers to posit some usable dimensions of moral education. Seven cornerstone principles appear to be universally involved both in the lives of literary characters and in the kind of heart-deep character development which educators try to nurture in students through the English curriculum. The seven principles are: design, authority, conscience, love, power, destiny, and wisdom. The principles suggest a possible thematic scope and sequence for a complete literature curriculum, both within and between grade levels. Within each grade level the central theme could be examined in the light of each of the other principles. Presented in this way, the cornerstone principles would generate a kind of spiral curriculum of morally educative units, each year adding to the students' understanding of important social and ethical values. Year after year, they can be engaged in a vital and personal experiencing of literature, be asked questions that require them to come to grips with some universal principles of character, and be motivated toward an active involvement in solving personal and community problems. A series of exercises revolving around Shakespeare's "Hamlet" illustrate how the cornerstone principles can be applied. Educators must recognize that character development is a lifelong process, and that there are more key factors outside the classroom than in it. (One figure is included; two extensive appendixes containing a character development ladder and a detailed examination of the cornerstone principles, and 82 endnotes are attached.) (MG)

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LIFE, LITERATURE, AND CHARACTER: SOME CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES

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There have been voices crying in the wilderness these last few years, calling for a return both in society and in our schools to the traditional values of family, God, and country.1 It's been easy to dismiss these cries as merely the latest evidence of a creeping sectarianism, but I think we've been missing the point. The cry against "secular humanism" and the call for character development programs in the schools, while perhaps not free from sectarian motivations, also voice a widely shared and profound disenchantment with the moral relativism of the modern age. They echo the poet Yeats' lament that "all things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,"2 but, like Yeats, they also seek to affirm that "all things fall and are built again"3--that it's possible to challenge and train our children to "build the old wastes" and to "raise up...the desolations of many generations."4

Responding to this demand for a return to traditional values, a recent ASCD panel, noting that "an emphasis on moral values has characterized American education from its inception," recommends that "publishers...revise textbooks to include appropriate religious and moral themes in literary and art history anthologies,"5 and another ASCD panel on moral education has concluded that:

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> Educators need to be sensitive to students' religious beliefs and respect their legitimacy, yet must not promote such beliefs in the classroom. Teachers should stress the democratic and intellectual bases for morality, but they should also encourage children to bring their intellectual, cultural, and religious resources to bear on moral issues.6

Morals and Character in English

The modern age and moral relativism notwithstanding, we English teachers have often seen ourselves as "keepers of the flame," the caretakers of our literary and cultural heritage and the shapers not only of our students'language competencies but of their characters as well.7 As participants in the now-fabled Dartmouth Conference agreed, "The case for literature is that it stands for humanity at a time when the human values are not upheld, as they used to be, by religion and the home, or even by education itself as a whole."8

Using literature to develop character is, of course, an ancient idea. Plato thought the moral influence of literature so great that he warned against "chance stories fashioned by chance teachers" whose writings would communicate "opinions...contrary to those we...think it desireable" for children to hold.9 The Hindus taught that "the artifice of fables" could be very helpful in the "moral guidance of youths,"10 and the Bible recommends its own Old and New Testament stories as valuable for "instruction in righteousness" and the development of patience, comfort, hope, and wisdom.11

In colonial America, the Bible, catechism, and/or hymnal

comprised the sole language arts curriculum in the schools, and there was little if any distinction between literary and moral instruction.12 Even as the nation and its schools became more and more secularized, textbooks such as the much-maligned McGuffey Readers remained unabashedly moralistic in their selection and presentation of excerpts from world literature.13 Ironically, although we tend to characterize the McGuffey era as a kind of golden age of homespun morality in American education, a 1920 study by Parkins noted a steady decline in overtly moral and religious topics in American school textbooks: from 100% in 1776, to 50% from 1786-1825, to 21% from 1825-1888, to a mere 5% from 1916-1920.14 The decline was so precipitous that by 1894 the National Education association was deploring the lack of moral instruction in the schools,15 and the early 1900s saw the flowering of the "character education" movement both within the public school system and through the rise of scouting and other character-building youth organizations in communities across the nation.16

Generally, character education programs attempted to teach a body of moral principles and character traits that would be acceptable to children from all religious backgrounds and in keeping with the historic goals of a democratic society. A variety of direct and indirect techniques were used. The Character Education Institute, for example, published the influential "Hutchins Code," which consisted of eleven "laws" (e.g., the Law of Self-control, the Law of Good Health, the Law

of Kindness, the Law of Duty, etc.) for examination in ten- to fifteen-minute daily lessons,17 while the Character Development League of New York City used the biographies of great men and women and a discussion of their moral virtues as the basis for its supplementary classroom materials.18

The proliferation of such approaches led to a spate of research to evaluate their effectiveness. The classic studies of Hartshorne and May--Studies in Deceit (1928), Studies in Service and Self-control (1929), and Studies in Organization of Character (1930)--concluded that the relationship between good conduct and character education programs was at best very slight and noted the greater "effectiveness of 'doing,' practice, and situation-and-response" approaches over more didactic methods.19 Wynne believes that these findings marked a turning point in attempts to teach moral values in the schools,20 and they appear to have undergirded the National Education association's Tenth Yearbook criticism of "trait approaches" to character education.21

Dewey, Raths, and Kohlberg

Although character codes, creeds, and slogans were not quickly done away with, specific courses and supplementary character-building materials soon became a thing of the past and yielded to the growing influence of Dewey and others who called for approaches to moral education that were more integrated with the curriculum. "Every subject, every method of instruction, every incident of school life," Dewey asserted, is "pregnant with moral possibility."22 Echoing the Hartshorne and May findings,

he criticized trait-building approaches, affirming that

> There is nothing in the nature of ideas <u>about</u> morality, or information <u>about</u> honesty and purity or kindness which automatically transmutes such ideas into good character or good conduct.23

Like many of the methods Dewey advocated, however, this "morality of the task"24 approach to character development may have worked well within the confines of his experimental school, but most communities lacked the commitment needed to implement his conviction that "the best and deepest moral training" would occur when teachers learned how to help students "enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought."25 Thus, by 1950 the NEA's Educational Policies Commission was still exhorting teachers to "use initiative and imagination in the development of their subject matter in ways to teach moral and spiritual values,"26 and school administrators were reminded that "it is the responsibility of the public school to develop moral and spiritual values as they occur in the relations and functions of the school community, the content of the curriculum, and its guidance program."27 The rhetoric was uplifting, but more often than not the reality fell far short of Dewey's organic, teach-as-you-go ideal.

Not until the sixties did moral education again become the focus of serious research and curriculum planning. The values clarification methods of Raths, Harmin, and Simon28 and the moral reasoning approaches of Kohlberg and others29 gained popularity and reopened the old debate about the place of direct moral

education and character development in the schools. Interestingly, both values clarification and Kohlberg's cognitive moral development model trace their roots to the anti-indoctrination philosophy of Dewey. Both stress the teacher's role in helping students to clarify and develop their own ethical values, and, at least in their early formulations, argued strongly against the imposition of moral absolutes and the trait-building approach to character education.30

In values clarification, the teacher uses a variety of questioning strategies (to capitalize on moral issues which arise during classroom interactions) and other, more structured, activities and materials to help students become aware of their own values. According to Raths, the intent is not to teach values but rather a value-awareness in which individuals arrive at their own standards "by an intelligent process of choosing, prizing and acting."31

Not surprisingly, a major criticism of values clarification has been that, while it may help individuals to clarify their own values, it only compounds the already difficult problem of ethical relativism and the breakdown of authority which has characterized the modern age.32 Harmin, one of Rath's early collaborators, concedes that their original "emphasis on value neutrality probably did undermine traditional morality" and opines that "it would have been better had we presented a more balanced picture, had we emphasized the importance of helping students both to clarify their own personal values <u>and</u> to adopt society's moral

values."33 He enumerates some of the principles which comprise what he calls "our heritage of moral values" (truthfulness, caring, loyalty, and sharing, for example) but still insists, as did the originators of values clarification, that the teacher not impose these values but rather help students clarify their own thinking about them.

> Young people today certainly need moral leaders. They need us to speak up for the value wisdom of the past, to inspire them to do good and be good, to call them up short when they slip into bad habits, to voice indignation when we see violations of what is right, and to be living examples of what we know is good. They need guidance and support...We do not serve young people well when we act as if morals are not important. Yet we do not serve them well if we act only as moral leaders. There are too many other leaders and too many confounding inner and outer temptations and pressures. Young people need help in sorting it all out for themselves and choosing what to do. As leaders, we can point the path to the good life. But we cannot walk it for another person. Each must find a way to walk it alone, even when no one is watching. We do well to give young people practice in the skills that will help them find and walk their paths.34

At first glance, this is quite a concession to the current cry for a return to the "wisdom of the past," but it's equally clear that the primary focus of values clarification is still on the individual--even, if necessary, at the expense of long-standing cultural values.

In Kohlberg's cognitive moral development model, the emphasis is again on helping the individual student to develop a viable ethical system, but it is held that the ultimate value and goal in that system will be the same for all people in all cultures: justice and the establishment of the just society.35

Kohlberg sees three levels of moral growth in an individual's sense and practice of justice--pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional--and, within these levels, six stages of development which, according to his extensive cross-cultural studies, appear to be universal:

PRE-CONVENTIONAL

Stage 1: An obedience and punishment orientation: taking right action to avoid trouble.

Stage 2: A pragmatic orientation: taking right action to satisfy one's own needs and, occasionally, the needs of others.

CONVENTIONAL

Stage 3: The good-boy orientation: seeking approval by pleasing and helping others; conforming to stereotypes of expected behavior.

Stage 4: A respect for authority orientation: maintaining social order; doing one's duty.

POST-CONVENTIONAL

Stage 5: A contractual, legalistic orientation: duty defined in terms of majority will and welfare.

Stage 6: The conscience or principle orientation: acting on principles demonstrated to have logical universality; a sense of mutual respect and trust.36

Kohlberg's stages provide a basis for a moral education curriculum, or at least for a more structured approach to the development of moral standards than that provided by values clarification. Teachers are encouraged to identify the moral

stages of their students and to provide a variety of case study "moral dilemmas," the discussion of which is designed to help students move to the next level of moral development. Kohlberg also holds that higher-order thinking (Stages 5 and 6) can be "stimulated through focused discussion of moral issues ...found in literature and history, as well as in naturally occurring classroom interactions,"37 and English teachers have been receptive to his recommendations.38 Like Dewey, however, Kohlberg cautions that an "explicit intellectual curriculum of moral education" alone is not sufficient to ensure moral growth; rather, the curriculum must be embedded in, and be a reflection of, what he calls a "just school"--a school where the "moral character and ideology of the teachers and principal...are translated into a working social atmosphere."39 Moral growth, he insists, is not simply a matter of "educational technique or ideology or means, but a matter of the moral energy of the educator, of his communicated belief that his school or classroom has a human purpose."40

Morality in English

My aim here is not to discuss either the values clarification or moral reasoning models in depth but only to point out (a) that the continued interest in both approaches is symptomatic of a widely felt need to do something in education about the "moral wasteland" of contemporary American society, and (b) that neither model, despite its claims and intentions, is value-neutral--that each advocates one or more cherished and

unchangeable givens about morality: Kohlberg, the primacy of justice in any ethical system, and Raths, et. al., the absolute freedom of individuals to develop their own values.

Given this need and the inevitability of value assumptions in any curriculum,41 and given the historic interest of English teachers in teaching the great ideas and themes of world literature and in helping students respond intelligently to the moral dilemmas of the books they read, I believe it's appropriate, indeed necessary, for us as English teachers to posit some usable dimensions of moral education. Thus, the ones that follow are based not only on the social-psychological demands of youth and the requirements of democratic living, but on the universal literary themes with which we deal year-in and year-out.

It's important to acknowledge from the start that the approach for moral education advanced here is ultimately arbitrary and prescriptive.42 For twenty-seven years I have seen the same problems in the lives of my students, and they are getting worse not better: low self-esteem, disrespect for authority, a devaluation of human life, selfishness, unwillingness to sacrifice or serve, a lack of faith, a lack of vision, a lack of wisdom, a lack of concern for principled action. The crying need underlying all of this is RESPECT: respect for the unchangeable givens of one's own life...respect for authority...respect for others...respect for the plan and purpose of one's life...respect for the wisdom of the

ages...respect for ideas about God.

How can we (to use the jargon of our own curriculum guides) "foster" or "inculcate" such virtuous attitudes? Looking back over the history of character education, it's clear that there is no one way to achieve these ends. There is a place for direct instruction--for exhortation even. There is a place for reading and discussing exemplary stories and biographies. There is a place for role-playing, resource speakers, field trips, and community service projects. Clearly, there is no dearth of activities that can be done both inside and outside of the school to build character. What has been missing is a framework for such development. Kohlberg's six stages are invaluable in this respect as a guide to what might be attempted, but his model, though certainly not inimical to the aims of the typical secondary literature curriculum, lends itself more readily to issues and topics in the social studies domain.

What is proposed here goes beyond the single virtue focus of Kohlberg's "just school." Justice by definition is two-dimensional; it is a social concept, focusing on relationships between people. Morality, however, in its broadest meaning, is at least three-dimensional. To be sure, it involves both how we think about and treat ourselves and how we think about and relate to others,43 but there is also a vertical dimension: how we think about and respond to principles and influences greater than both our own lives and the society in which we live, a dimension which Hartshorne called "the capacity of vision, of experiencing

in one grasp of attention the whole that the world may signify."44

In a similar vein, a contemporary novelist, Robert Stone, has written that "fiction is inextricably linked with concerns of morality" and that "stories explain the nature of things."

> Any fictional work of serious intent argues for the significance of its story. A reader holds the characters in judgment, investing sympathy or withholding it, always alert for recognitions, hoping to see his lonely state reflected across time, space, and circumstance. How then can fiction ever be independent of morality?45

My assumption here is that if there is indeed something about literature that is inescapably moral, then an examination of the most frequently taught thematic units should reveal some key principles that can be used to foster moral growth in the English classroom.

The Cornerstone Principles

Such a study--of a wide range of literature textbooks past and present, as well as literature curriculum guides and school district booklists--has led me to posit seven principles that appear to be universally involved both in the lives of literary characters and in the kind of heart-deep character development we try to nurture in our students through the English curriculum. The principles can be quickly listed but will need much elaboration; they are: DESIGN...AUTHORITY... CONSCIENCE ...LOVE ...POWER...DESTINY...and WISDOM.

I have seen these principles in Havighurst's important study of the developmental tasks of adolescence (see p.23) and in

earlier and more recent approaches to character education.46 I have seen them embedded in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other foundational documents of American democracy.47 I have also studied them in the work of Lovejoy and others in the history of ideas and in Northrop Frye's and others' analyses of archetypes in literature and world cultures.48 To all of this, I add my own experience of working with literary themes in the English classroom--years gladly spent not only learning how best to teach, but trying all the while to help students from twelve to sixty find in literature a way to make sense of a world where the only thing that can be counted on is an increasing, even dizzying, sense of indeterminacy and impermanence.

The books and units that have worked best have been ones that supply what has been needed; and what has been needed is what has been lost: confidence in some few unchangeable principles of human conduct and purpose. "If the foundations be destroyed," lamented King David, "what can the righteous do?"49 The scriptural response, of course, is clear: they can build their houses not on the shifting sands of moral relativism but "upon a rock" of timeless moral principle.50 Biblical allusions aside, however, this is not a call for a sectarian religious revival in the schools, but for the restoration of the moral vision and commitment of our profession. As teachers we are committed to uphold the law and maintain the separation of church and state in public education, but we are equally responsible to

communicate the moral imperatives which motivated the framers of the Constitution and which have always found a voice in the world's best literature. In short, the position advanced here is that while we must not dictate the religious views of our students, we can provide them with the moral foundations they need to develop strong and wholesome characters.

Used as cornerstones for a literature curriculum, the seven principles can help teachers identify themes that are morally challenging and can provide a structure for character development in English. In fact, the principles appear to comprise a sequence of moral focal points comparable to Havighurst's developmental tasks of adolescence,51 with each one representing an increasingly formidable challenge to moral growth. The principles are fully elaborated in Appendix B (see pages 55-78), but their key elements, along with related literary themes, are as follows:

THE CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES

1. DESIGN

   a. Definition

      All individuals, organisms, and objects have an intrinsic and optimal order essential to their proper functioning.

   b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks (Havighurst)

      (1) Accepting and developing one's physical characteristics
      (2) Achieving a mature self-image

c. Moral Application and Challenge

Circumstances and forces beyond our control have built unchangeable givens into the life of each individual. Learning to understand, accept, and respect such givens in oneself and others is a mark of moral maturity.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) self-acceptance
(2) empathy
(3) respect for others
(4) respect for nature
(5) respect for ideas about God
(6) humility

e. Sample Literary Themes/Units

(1) Search for Personal Identity: Who Am I?
(2) Miracle Workers: Overcoming Handicaps
(3) Awesome Odds: Humans against Nature

2. AUTHORITY

a. Definition

In human societies there are levels of authority which influence the behavior of people under them.

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks

(1) Achieving emotional independence
(2) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior
(3) Acquiring an ethical system as a guide to behavior

c. Moral Application and Challenge

Learning to submit, appeal, or relate respectfully to the authorities in our lives is an important requisite for moral maturity and personal fulfillment.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) respect for authority
(2) obedience to laws

(3) deference
(4) flexibility
(5) cooperation
(6) duty

e. Sample Literary Themes/Units

(1) The Family: Who's the Boss?
(2) School Days: The Teacher in Literature
(3) Nonconformity: Loners and Rebels

3. CONSCIENCE

a. Definition

People have a unique potential for exercising moral judgment. They have, and can develop further, a sense of right and wrong that can keep them from violating ethical principles and moral laws.

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks

(1) Achieving more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
(2) Taking responsibility for one's physical health
(3) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior
(4) Acquiring an ethical system as a guide to behavior

c. Moral Application and Challenge

Each individual is responsible for the personal and social consequences of his/her thoughts, words, and actions.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) honesty
(2) integrity
(3) social concern
(4) responsibility
(5) justice

e. Sample Literary Themes/Topics

(1) Loyalties: Moral Dilemmas among Friends
(2) The Elderly in Literature
(3) Prejudice: Toward a Just Society

4. LOVE

a. Definition

Individuals experience a commitment to serve and, if necessary, to sacrifice for others--an involvement which can have physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks

(1) Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
(2) Achieving emotional independence
(3) Preparing for family life
(4) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior

c. Moral Application and Challenge

Recognizing human interdependency and the need for self-sacrifice is an important indicator of moral maturity.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) sensitivity
(2) kindness
(3) service
(4) loyalty
(5) commitment
(6) self-sacrifice

e. Sample Literary Themes/Units

(1) Cupid or Commitment: Romantic versus Mature Love
(2) Famous Friendships
(3) No Greater Love: The Way of Sacrifice

5. POWER

a. Definition

Individuals possess limited degrees of strength (physical, emotional, or spiritual) and external influence (the capacity to give or withhold assistance or rewards).

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks

(1) Using the body effectively
(2) Achieving assurance of economic independence
(3) Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for competence
(4) Acquiring an ethical system

c. Moral Application and Challenge

The morally mature individual understands that many problems, obstacles, and challenges in life can only be surmounted by relying on a power greater than oneself.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) diligence
(2) perseverance
(3) patience
(4) courage
(5) interdependence
(6) faith

e. Sample Literary Themes/Units

(1) Profiles in Courage
(2) What Is Success?
(3) Conquering Faith

6. DESTINY

a. Definition

Individuals often experience an apparently necessary and inevitable succession of events which they attribute to forces beyond themselves.

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks

(1) Accepting one's physical characteristics
(2) Selecting and preparing for an occupation
(3) Preparing for family life
(4) Acquiring an ethical system

c. Moral Application and Challenge

Morally mature individuals find purpose in living when they dedicate their time,

talents, and resources to the achievement of goals that transcend their own lives.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) contentment
(2) decisiveness
(3) endurance
(4) orderliness
(5) purposefulness
(6) confidence

e. Sample Literary Themes/Units

(1) Surprise Endings
(2) I Am Captain: Free Will vs. Fate
(3) Behind the Scenes: Historical Fiction

7. WISDOM

a. Definition

Individuals can judge rightly when they base their decisions not only on a broad range of experience and knowledge but on an understanding of basic moral principles.

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks

(1) Achieving a mature self-image
(2) Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for competence
(3) Acquiring an ethical system

c. Moral Application and Challenge

The mature person understands, cherishes, and applies universal moral principles.

d. Character Trait Goals

(1) farsightedness
(2) interdependence
(3) acceptance
(4) prudence
(5) moderation
(6) trust
(7) love

e. Sample Literary Themes/Units

(1) Famous Journeys: The Search for Meaning
(2) Why Do the Righteous Suffer?
(3) Biographies of the Wise and Famous

I see these cornerstone principles as having the force of natural laws that are rooted both in the life-needs of our students and in what LaConte calls the "powerful recurrent themes" which generations of English teachers have thought worthy to teach.52 The principles are not themselves themes (although they can be use as such to organize units of literature); they are more akin to what Langer calls "generative ideas," concepts which "give rise to specific questions,"53 the answers to which can take the form of a musical composition, a dance, a sculpture, a philosophical treatise, or a work of literature.

Other writers will choose other principles, of course, but I believe these seven do raise questions that can help students understand the moral dilemmas of literary characters and the ethical challenges in their own lives. Stated as either-or polarities, the principles generate questions such as those below and encourage students to establish and discuss a continuum of responses:

DESIGN:

Do the characters in this work accept the unchangeable physical and familial givens of their lives, or do they reject or resist them? (What about you?)

AUTHORITY:

Do the characters respect and cooperate with the authorities in their lives, or do they rebel against them? (What about you?)

CONSCIENCE:

Do the characters respect others by choosing to do good, or do they choose to do evil? (What about you?)

LOVE:

Are the characters selfish or selfless? (What about you?)

POWER:

Do the characters depend on themselves or on other sources of power? (What about you?)

DESTINY:

Do the characters have a positive view of the universe and the plan and purpose of their lives or a negative one? (What about you?)

WISDOM:

Do the characters have, cherish, and act upon universal moral principles, or do they reject or lack such principles? (What about you?)

Plato held that learning to ask and answer the right questions was the secret of education,54 and as we will see, teacher questions comprise a large part of the character-building program in the classroom.55 In its Greek origins, however, the word <u>character</u> means "to engrave"; so when we say we want to develop our students' characters, we're talking about making some

deeper, more distinctive, and enduring marks on their hearts and minds than questioning alone can produce. If we do this primarily through literature, and by teaching our students to respond to literature with moral sensitivity, it will be helpful to take a closer look at what methods other than questioning are available to us. What follows, then, is both a compendium of current practices in the often tacit and unplanned development of character that goes on all the time in the English classroom and a rationale for using the cornerstone principles to enhance that growth.

Jacob's Ladder: The Ascent of Character

The seven principles comprise the top rung of a kind of "Jacob's Ladder" (see Figure 1, page 25) which can help us both to visualize the character-building process and to remember the resources and methods for moral education that we have at our disposal. The ladder enables us to see how we can move students from self-centeredness to a character-building involvement with their local community and with the community of ideas.

The chart is to be read initially from bottom to top, beginning with "Student Needs" and "Student Interests," and ascending through three phases of character development which are often observed in students' response to literature:

(1) Identification--students individually begin to develop an ability to assume the perspective of other persons;

(2) Interaction--students begin to interact intellectually and socially in discussions and debates concerning people different from themselves; and

(3) Involvement--students have opportunities in assigned or voluntary projects of longer duration to associate with people from different backgrounds.56

The progression is from self to other, and the methods and/or activities at each rung of the ladder follow a similar sequence, moving into ever-widening domains, from the individual...to the classroom group...to the literary work...to the community...and finally to the community of ideas. As in the Kohlberg model,

> moral development follows a three-level progression from an egocentric through a societal to a universal perspective. An individual's moral judgment grows less and less dependent on immediate personal and interpersonal reference points and, in the highest stages, becomes anchored in universal principles...57

The seven needs listed at the foundational bottom of the ladder/chart are a reclustering of Havighurst's twelve "developmental tasks of adolescence," outlined in his influential work, Human Development and Education. Intrinsically related to the seven cornerstone principles at the top of the ladder, the needs are viewed--along with those principles--as non-optional starting points for a character development curriculum; they include:

1. the need for a positive self-image;
2. the need for satisfying peer relationships;
3. the need for emotional maturity;
4. the need for economic independence;
5. the need to acquire intellectual skills;
6. the need to become socially responsible; and
7. the need to choose a system of morals and ethics.58

The "Interests," on the other hand, are open-ended

(indicated by the ETC.), although the seven listed are ones which perennially rank at the top of my students' discussion and book preferences.59

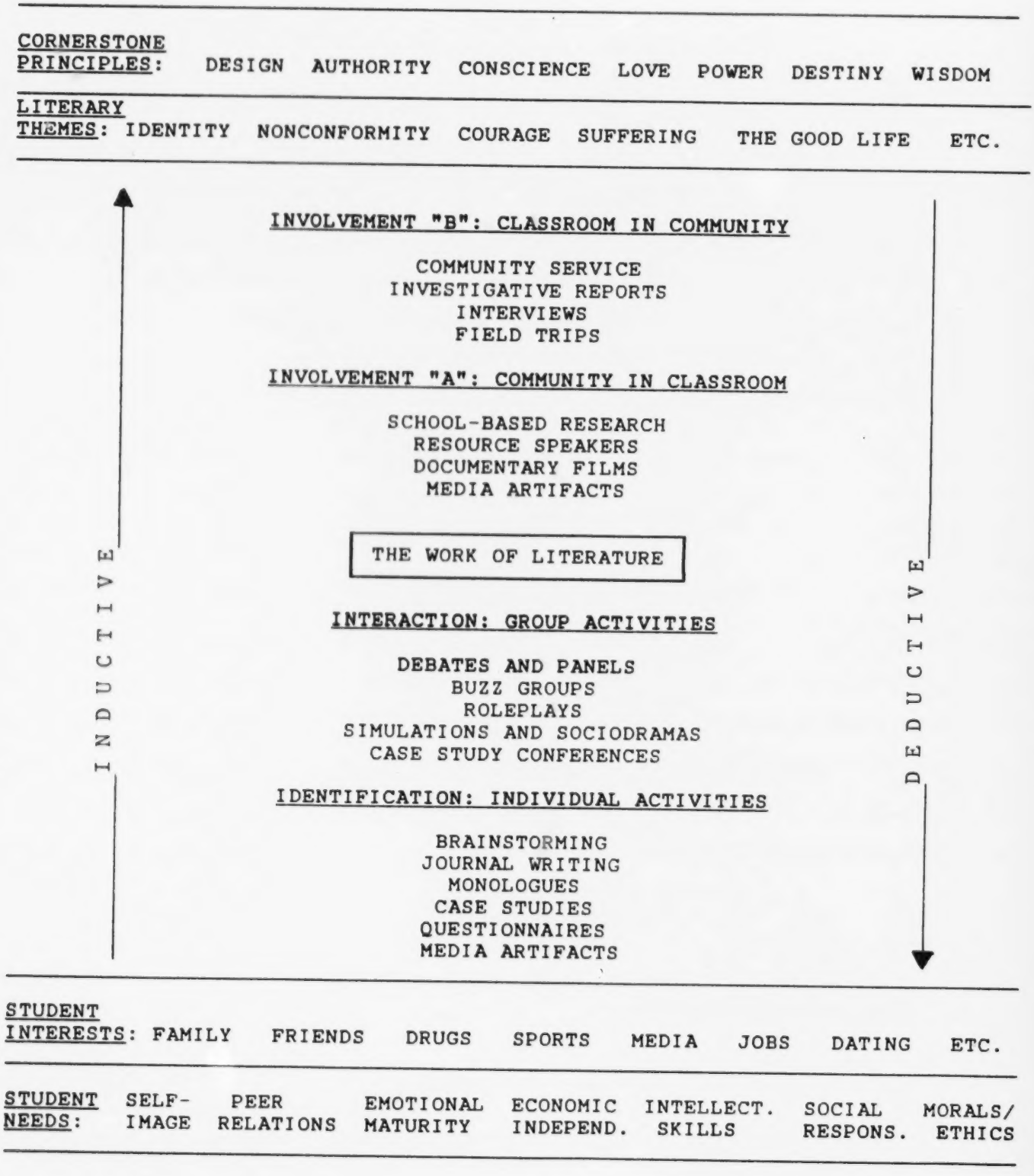
The "Literary Themes" listed on the next-to-last rung are arbitrary, but they are derived from one or another of the cornerstone principles above them. Like the student interests, they are open-ended and will vary from teacher to teacher, class to class, and year to year.

As indicated above, the seven "Cornerstone Principles"60 on the top rung (see pp.14-20 and Appendix B) are viewed as a recurring core of character-building ideas which underlie the thematic units most frequently taught in the English classroom.

In the hands of teachers whose hearts and minds are tuned to the world of archetypes, symbols, and themes, the cornerstone principles and the metaphor of Jacob's Ladder can help students see the awesome closeness of the infinite in their daily lives and can lead them, like Jacob, to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!" Again, it is not religion that we want to encourage, but the understanding that a work of literature can be a "gate of heaven,"61 a pathway or bridge to life-changing and life-giving insights and ideas, and the touchstone of a person of character who, like Jacob, is willing to pay the cost for a lasting blessing.

My interest in ladders and bridge-building in education derives from a statement by Dewey. Although there is much in his work that is still controversial (and much which I reject on

(FIGURE 1)


CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES: DESIGN AUTHORITY CONSCIENCE LOVE POWER DESTINY WISDOM
LITERARY THEMES: IDENTITY NONCONFORMITY COURAGE SUFFERING THE GOOD LIFE ETC.
INVOLVEMENT "B": CLASSROOM IN COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY SERVICE
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS
INTERVIEWS
FIELD TRIPS
INVOLVEMENT "A": COMMUNITY IN CLASSROOM
SCHOOL-BASED RESEARCH
RESOURCE SPEAKERS
DOCUMENTARY FILMS
MEDIA ARTIFACTS
INDUCTIVE
THE WORK OF LITERATURE
DEDUCTIVE
INTERACTION: GROUP ACTIVITIES
DEBATES AND PANELS
BUZZ GROUPS
ROLEPLAYS
SIMULATIONS AND SOCIODRAMAS
CASE STUDY CONFERENCES
IDENTIFICATION: INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES
BRAINSTORMING
JOURNAL WRITING
MONOLOGUES
CASE STUDIES
QUESTIONNAIRES
MEDIA ARTIFACTS
STUDENT INTERESTS: FAMILY FRIENDS DRUGS SPORTS MEDIA JOBS DATING ETC.
STUDENT NEEDS: SELF-IMAGE PEER RELATIONS EMOTIONAL MATURITY ECONOMIC INDEPEND. INTELLECT. SKILLS SOCIAL RESPONS. MORALS/ETHICS

philosophical grounds), his insights into effective classroom methodology were often uncannily accurate. This excerpt from "The Child and the Curriculum," for example, which has been edited to emphasize its application to the teaching of literature, provides a clear rationale for using a "ladder" such as I've described to develop and implement units for the English classroom.

> The source of whatever is dead, mechanical, and formal in [the English classroom] is found precisely in the subordination of the life and experience of the child to the curriculum...
>
> What, then, is the problem? It is just to get rid of the prejudicial notion that there is some gap in kind (as distinct from degree) between the child's experience and [the works of literature which we want them to understand and appreciate]. From the side of the child, it is a question of seeing how his experience already contains within itself elements--facts and truths--of just the same sort as those [found in the literary works]...From the side of [the literary works], it is a question of interpreting [them] as outgrowths of forces operating in the child's life, and discovering the steps that intervene between the child's present experience and their richer maturity...
>
> Hence the need of reinstating into experience the [content of each literary work]. It must be restored to the experience from which it has been abstracted. It needs to be psychologized; turned over, translated into the immediate and individual experiencing within which it has its origin and significance...
>
> The problem of the teacher is...inducing a vital and personal experiencing. Hence, what concerns him, as teacher, is the ways in which [the literary work] may become a part of experience; what there is in the child's present that is usable with reference to it, [and] how such elements are to be used...62

Three questions about ladders and bridges--what Dewey calls intervening steps--need to be answered here:

1. How do we get from our students' experience to the literary work?

2. Once in the literary work, how do we maintain contact with our students' lives while helping them to make contact with the heart and mind of the writer?

3. Having read the work of literature, how do we help students focus on the enduring character-building principles implicit in the work's conflicts and themes? How do we build meaningful, even life-changing, bridges to the real world: not only the local, national, and international communities but the world of wisdom, morality, and truth as well?

Climbing the Ladder: Enter Hamlet

Let's take Hamlet, for example, and examine how the ladder can help a teacher plan a unit in which the play's conflicts and themes become meaningful to students while engaging them in a process of personal character development.

First, I check the obvious: Is Hamlet still appropriate to my students' needs and interests? No elaborate image-counting is necessary; a quick look at the bottom rung of the ladder ("Student Needs") confirms that matters related to self-image ("O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!"), peer relations ("My excellent good friends!"), emotional maturity ("To be or not to be: that is the question"), social responsibility ("The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!"), and ethics ("Something is rotten in the state of Denmark") figure largely in the play.

With family, friends, and dating high on my students' list of interests, I move ahead, confident that despite important

differences of language and culture, the problems which Hamlet faced and the issues he had to resolve are still very much alive. The challenge, as always, is to find new and better bridges between the world of today and the world of Hamlet--between the moral dilemmas of the noble Prince and the value conflicts which my students face each day.63

Pre-reading Activities: Identifying/Interacting with Proto-Hamlet

Looking at some of the techniques available on the identification rungs of the ladder (and this is not meant to be an exhaustive list),64 I begin to think of ways that a case study65 of a more modern Hamlet might be put together. Within minutes I am writing/compiling letters, journal entries, photographs, magazine articles, poems, song titles--artifacts from the life of a fictional student, "James G.," which will make it easier for my students to identify with Prince Hamlet when we finally meet him. For example:

ARTIFACT #1: A LETTER FROM JAMES

March 25, 1988

Dear Dr. T,

You gave us an assignment to write about a "particularly vivid dream" we've had, so here it is.

I dreamed that I took a hammer (a big sledge hammer) and killed my stepfather. Then I killed myself with a .38 magnum. THE END!

Nice dream huh? You wrote on my last evaluation that I was a "mature and thoughtful student." Appearances are deceiving aren't they?

I'm writing this note because it's easier than

talking face to face right now, but I really need to talk to you. Soon.

Thanks,

James G.

ARTIFACT #2: JOURNAL ENTRY

December 15, 1987

It's a year today since my Pop died and I still feel like my whole life's in pieces. I can't seem to get a hold on anything or care about anything. I feel like I'm in a dark pit or like I'm being pulled deeper and deeper into a swamp.

I still don't understand why he had to die. Sometimes it hurts me so deep I can feel my guts twisting and crying. I feel so sore inside. There was so much I wanted to tell him and so much I wanted him to see me accomplish in life.

ARTIFACT #3: JOURNAL ENTRY

Feb. 3, 1987

I can't believe my mom's doing this! She just met this guy and they're already talking marriage. And the guy's such a loser! I know she's been feeling bad and she needs somebody to care for her, but I really hate this guy. I can't stand this guy! I can't stand the way he looks at her and touches her.

I guess I'm still just angry about Pop.

Damn. Nothing's right now.

I just want to get out of here. I feel like my whole life's a waste up to this point. I feel bad today, real bad.

Frankly, when I first compiled these and other case study

materials, I thought they were so patently fake and so clearly related to the plot and conflicts of Hamlet that my students would immediately see my intent. Quite the contrary. There was an immediate identification with "James G.," an almost palpable sympathy, and an enthusiastic desire to offer help. A kind of "Dear Abby" syndrome came into play, and when I asked them to write down their nonprofessional analyses of his problems, I was surprised at just how closely they had identified with this proto-Hamlet. Here are two excerpts from their response journals and two letters of advice written to James G.

> It seems to me like James is a very sensitive person. He's like me. I'll write letters instead of saying it in person. I'd try to talk to James and find out what kind of environment he lives in. I'd try to help him see he can't control his Mom's life and that sometimes you just have to learn to deal with a bad situation.
>
> ***
>
> Well I understand what James G. is going through because I live with my mom and stepfather. We don't have any problems so far and I hope we don't either. To me I think my stepfather senses that there is a dislike in the air, the same as in James's case. (My father isn't dead but he doesn't live with us.) But James has to realize that his father is dead and he can't dwell on his death. So I think someone should talk man to man with him and discuss his problem, because if not something bad might happen.
>
> ***
>
> Dear James,
>
> I understand how you are feeling, because I never had a father. I never knew him. And any male figure who enters my mother's life I resent to a certain extent. So our situations are similar. James, don't do anything harsh. Before it comes to that, I would suggest you talk to your mother. Tell her how you

feel. Move out, if necessary, but don't do anything violent.

***

Dear James,

I understand the way you feel right now, but you have to remember that life goes on and you have to live each day as it comes. Both of my parents are dead, and I felt anger toward the whole world. I had no one. Even my relatives weren't there for me. I had to get adopted.

I know you're depressed and confused, but if you talk your feelings out with your Mom, maybe things will change. Maybe the guy is not such a jerk if you get to know him.

Also, try to think of positive things and go out more with your friends, because thinking negative can make you feel real bad. O.K.?

***

Such strong feelings need to be aired and examined as fully as possible at this point, for it is in telling and hearing their own life stories that students begin to develop the kind of mutual sensitivity that is at the heart of any effective program of character development. In addition, however, such strong responses also open a whole range of pre-reading bridges at both the identification and interaction levels (see Figure 1). Three or four activities such as the following are usually sufficient to explore these initial responses and to prepare students for the play.

Identification Activities (for individuals):

1. The case study: students consider the problems of James G. and brainstorm a list of possible solutions.

2. Monologues, dialogues, and/or journal entries: students put themselves in the shoes of the case study characters and write what they imagine might be thought, spoken, or written.

Interaction Activities (for pairs and groups):

1. Pairs of students roleplay dialogues involving James G. and "Ophelia," "Gertrude," "Horatio," and "Claudius" counterparts from the case study.

2. Students meet in small groups to discuss "new" case study artifacts introduced by teacher.

3. Students simulate a case conference of social workers considering approaches to James G's problems.

It's important not to overdo these pre-reading activities. Instead, the initial enthusiasm can be carried into the play, using "James G." as a kind of intermittent foil to Hamlet. Otherwise the case study will become a self-contained unit and may leave students oversaturated with the problems and themes we want them to consider in the drama proper.

During-reading Activities:
Maintaining Involvement

Just before we start the play, I reveal the actual sources of the "James G." case study artifacts: the life of the fictional character Hamlet, students I have known over the years, and, not least, elements in my own life that resonate to the conflicts and issues found in the play. Students will accept the initial gambit in light of such an explanation, and by this time James has become sufficiently real to them that we may continue to use the case study as a motivating and clarifying device throughout the play.

During the actual reading of Hamlet, a variety of individual and group activities--roleplays, monologues, journals, buzz groups and additional case study conferences66--may be used to

sustain interest in Hamlet as a person and to explore his relationships with his friends and family members. Invariably, the same proprietary interest that students felt toward "James G." is transferred to Hamlet as they begin to discuss his problems and understand his personality. Despite the obvious differences of language and culture, students begin to adopt a case-study, problem-solving approach to the play, which usually results in a closer reading of the text. There is more motivation, for example, to read the gloss on "quietus" and "bodkin" when you are trying to help a fellow who's contemplating suicide than there is when your teacher assigns yet another scene and purple worksheet for homework.

Again, we need to beware of overdoing efforts to maintain student interest at the expense of teaching literary concepts and skills. As Squire aptly warns, "Whenever concern with interactive literary experience becomes isolated from the literature which gives it birth, we tend to substitute method for content."67 I don't think Squire (or anyone lately) is calling for an exclusively "new critical" approach of formal textual analysis, but rather for a balance between our efforts to motivate and our commitment to teach. I still assign scenes and issue purple worksheets--we study foils and figures of speech, comic relief, blank verse, soliloquies, and symbols--but I try to frame questions that will require language study and teach literary terms not for their own sake but for what light they can shed on the motivations and conflicts of the main characters.

It is in the context of character analysis that the moral dimension of Hamlet (or any other literary work) is best introduced. If there are clear moral dilemmas in the work, they can be raised during class discussions, and students can be challenged to examine and articulate their own ethical standards as they attempt to recommend courses of action for the literary characters. Some moral questions which arise in a study of Hamlet include:

1. How should children respond to the immoral behavior of their parents?
2. Is suicide immoral? Which of Hamlet's options for dealing with his problems is most moral?
3. Are citizens morally obligated to eliminate the "rottenness" of their country? If so, how?

These questions focus attention on the moral dilemmas in the play, and they must be asked, but then I go on to pose other questions that can help surface the cornerstone principles underlying these conflicts, and, when appropriate, I challenge students to ask the same questions of their own lives. Take Design, for example, one of the major "generative ideas" in Hamlet. Here are sample questions that might be asked of both Hamlet and our students:

Principle: DESIGN
Portion of Play: ACT I

Questions about Hamlet:

1. What are the unchangeable facts or givens of Hamlet's family life? [an only child, father dead, mother remarried to uncle]
2. What are Hamlet's family responsibilities?

[the need to be loyal and respectful to his mother, to his stepfather-uncle-King, and to the memory of his father]

3. What attitudes or values has Hamlet inherited from his father? [a concern for the welfare of his mother and the kingdom of Denmark]

Questions for Students:

1. What are the unchangeable facts of your family life? (What is your birth order? Who makes up your family? How do you relate to your parents, step-parents if any, or guardians? How do you handle conflicts in your family?)

2. What are your family responsibilities? (Do you have any duties or obligations that you feel are more important than your own self-interest?)

3. What aspects of your heritage weigh upon you? (Do you feel a loyalty to the unfulfilled dreams of your parents, grandparents, people, or race? If so, how do you express that loyalty?)

Such questions raised judiciously throughout a first reading of the play prepare students for a more thorough examination of the cornerstone principles at the end of the play. More important, they remind students of the continuing relevance of literature to the moral conflicts and issues in their own lives. Literature taught in this way cannot help but be morally educative.

Beyond the Literary Work: The Community of Ideas

In making Hamlet accessible to our students by "psychologizing" the plot and characters during pre-reading activities (e.g., the case of "James G."), we sought to avoid the deadly formalism of literary analysis that can turn students away from the rich complexity of life the play depicts. What we most

emphatically do not want to do, therefore, is use the cornerstone principles and questions to brow-beat our students with an equally deadly didacticism. "What you react to," Frye says, "is the total structure of the story...not to some message or moral or Great Thought that you can snatch out of it and run away with."[68] In time, students may begin to recognize that passages such as "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties!" are related to the Design principle, but the point, even then, is not simply to find-the-moral or see how many cornerstone principles we can identify, but rather to understand the deepest thematic wellsprings of the work and to see how they are related to the moral challenges of our own lives.

Here, for example, are selected after-reading questions that can put students personally in touch with the community of ideas--the cornerstone principles which are at the very heart of the play. The questions work best when used as the basis for small group discussions over a period of two or three days, with the last day being a kind of symposium in which the groups share their conclusions.

The Cornerstone Principles:
After-reading Questions

DESIGN

1. Is Hamlet a "complete" person? Is he using (or able to use) all of his natural talents and abilities to solve his problems in positive ways?

a. Is he complete physically (in good health, with no physical handicaps)?

b. Is he complete emotionally (balanced, self-controlled, temperate)?

c. Is he complete intellectually (knowledgeable, teachable, tolerant)?

d. Is he complete socially (sociable, committed, loyal, supportive)?

e. Is he complete spiritually (having a clear conscience, committed to a moral code)?

2. How would <u>you</u> answer each of these questions?

AUTHORITY

1. Do some characters in this work have more authority than others? Who is in charge here? Who is the "low man on the totem pole"? Are there any conflicts based on this "pecking order"? How are they resolved?

2. Do any of the characters make reference to a belief in or reliance upon "higher authorities" (for example, the government, the laws or customs of the land, nature, moral laws, or God)? What role, if any, do these authorities play in the story? What role do they play in your life?

3. Who are the authorities in <u>your</u> life? How do you act toward them? How do you resolve conflicts with them?

CONSCIENCE

1. Do any of the characters in this story worry about the morality of their thoughts or deeds?

2. Do any of the characters seem to lack a conscience? What effect does that have on other characters?

3. Do you ever wonder if some things are right or wrong? How do you deal with such questions?

LOVE

1. Which of the following kinds of love are important in this story--either by their presence or by their absence?

_____Service	_____Patience
_____Loyalty	_____Kindness
_____Self-sacrifice	_____Physical affection
_____Sexual union	_____Tactfulness
_____Acceptance	_____Forgiveness
_____Patriotism	_____Obedience

2. Are there conflicts in the story between different types of love? How were they resolved? How do you resolve such conflicts in your own life?

3. How would the story have been different if key characters had been motivated by unselfish love? How would situations in your own life be different?

POWER

1. Who or what are the dominant forces in this story? What is the source of their power or influence?

2. Do any of the following kinds of power play an important part in this story: physical power? emotional strength? social force or pressure? spiritual power or influence?

3. What power do you rely on most often? Why?

DESTINY

1. Does the succession of events in the play seem inevitable? Are the conflicts which the characters experience unavoidable?

2. Do the characters ever sense some larger forces--either positive or negative--operating in their lives? What do they say or do about that?

3. Do you think each person has a special destiny to fulfill? What might yours be?

WISDOM

1. Do the characters in this story nature in important

ways? Do they get wiser? How? What are the most important lessons they learn?

2. What are the three most important things you've learned about life so far?
3. What <u>is</u> wisdom? How or where can you get it?

Asking such questions will not in itself guarantee the development of character; however, coupled with a rich array of home-, school-, and community-based projects (see below and Appendix B), and used in a variety of literature units during the adolescent years, the approach nurtures a sensitivity to moral issues and helps students learn respect for themselves and others, for the wisdom of the past, and for the welfare of future generations.

<u>Beyond the Literary Work: the Community</u>

With the reading behind them, students need to be motivated to bridge the gap between the literary work and the "real world" where most of their character-building experiences take place. In the first phase of this involvement, we will bring the community into the classroom, then we will take (or send) the class into the community, and finally we will help students to understand more fully the unique community of ideas which has found at least a partial voice in <u>Hamlet</u>.

Just as students' needs and interests helped us find a bridge to the play, so the conflicts and themes of the play enable us identify the social problems and settings toward which students' attention may now be directed. Media artifacts and

documentary films about broken families, teenage suicide, and political corruption may be brought into the classroom to spark wide-ranging discussions not only of the parallels they provide to Hamlet but of ways in which students may want to get involved ameliorating such problems, first as a class project and then, for some few students perhaps, as an ongoing commitment to community service.

Appendix B (see pages 54-77) contains a compendium of "Community Connection" projects that can be used with works of literature to examine each of the seven cornerstone principles, but here are some post-reading activities that have worked particularly well with Hamlet; they are written as they would appear on a student assignment sheet:

Design '89: A Cornerstone Exploration

This project is open-ended as far as the format is concerned; it can be a magazine, a play, a collection of poems, an extended essay, or a collection of essays. The object is to take a close look at the unique design or character of your generation and to answer these questions:

* What makes us tick?
* What ticks us off?
* What do we value and believe?
* What are our fears?
* What are our hopes and dreams?
* What "arms" can we take against our unique "sea of troubles"?

Brokenness: An Interview Project

One way of looking at Hamlet is to see him as a young man whose world has suddenly fallen apart--a man struggling to deal with broken family and personal relationships.

Develop a questionnaire about the causes and

treatment of broken homes, emotional breakdowns, and drug abuse. Visit a social worker, psychologist, school counselor, and religious leader. ask each of them the same questions, and see if you can discover similarities in how they try to help people whose lives have "fallen apart." Summarize your findings in a report.

A Matter of Conscience: An Experiment

Get alone in a quiet place (your room when no one's home, perhaps, or a bench in a safe park, or the back pew of a local house of worship during an off-hour). Use this time to search your conscience. Ask yourself if there are any people you've offended or any wrongs you've committed that have to be set right. Make a list of the people with whom you have to clear your conscience. Then, thoughtfully (prayerfully, if you're given to prayer) approach each person and express your regret or sorrow over what you did (or failed to do). Ask them to forgive you and thank them when they do. Keep a journal in which you (a) record your thoughts and preparations before each interview, (b) summarize what happened during each interview, and (c) evaluate how your efforts have helped you and the other person and how your future relationship with them may be affected.

An Experiment in Love

How can you show love to someone you don't get along with or even like? If you want to overcome such hostility or prejudice, you usually have to go through three stages: (a) Identification--trying to imagine how that person actually thinks and feels, (b) Association--making more prolonged contact with that person for the purpose of getting to know him or her better, and (c) Involvement--doing even more time-consuming things with that person (sharing special projects or events).

Keep a three-week journal in which each day you record what you've done to identify with the person you've chosen, to associate with him or her, and, finally, to get involved with them. Summarize your findings in an essay and continue your efforts even after the journal-keeping is over. (Remember: bad relationships don't happen

overnight; you can begin to improve or heal them in three weeks, but lasting improvement will take continued investment of good thoughts, positive contacts, and occasional deeper involvements.)

Power Journal

Each evening for three weeks, ask yourself, "What did I accomplish today?" Simply list the different projects you worked on or the different activities you engaged in (at home, in school, at work, or with your friends). Then decide which of the following kinds of power you used for each of your accomplishments:

(a). physical strength
(b). intellectual ability
(c). will-power (determination)
(d). spiritual resources (faith, prayer)
(e). sacrifice/service/love motive (the desire to do something for someone else)

At the end of each week, study your journal entries and summarize your findings. What kinds of power do you rely on or use most? Why? What kinds of power do you think you should try to develop? Why?

Power Over Oneself: An Experiment

Set a three-week goal for yourself during which time you plan to accomplish something important to you; for example: (a) breaking a bad habit, (b) learning a new skill (in music, for example, or athletics, math, English, etc.), (c) becoming a better (choose one): brother, sister, son, daughter, or friend. (If none of these goals speak to your particular needs or interests, make up your own goal.)

Keep a record--an Experiment Log--each day in which you record what you do to achieve your goal. Note what kinds of power you use to get closer to your goal (see previous project). At the end of three weeks read over your Experiment Log and write a summary report of your progress as well as a plan for continuing your efforts to reach your goal or, if you've reached it, to strengthen and extend your accomplishment.

The Destiny Journal

For the next three weeks, keep your eyes and ears open for the following words and phrases:

--DESTINY
--PROVIDENCE
--FATE
--HIGHER POWER
--HIGHER AUTHORITY
--AN ACT OF GOD
--IT'S GOD'S WILL
--IT (WAS or WASN'T) MEANT TO BE

Editorials, letters to the editor, and "Dear Abby"-type columns in the newspaper are particularly good places to look, as well as interviews with famous people in national weekly magazines. Your most frequent and interesting source, though, should be the conversations you participate in or overhear at home, at school, and on public transportation.

Record your findings in a journal, and at the end of three weeks write an essay in which you summarize what you've learned about people's ideas about destiny--the notion that their lives are being influenced or controlled by a power greater than their own will.

Shaping Someone's Destiny: Volunteer Work

Ask your counselor for help in locating Get-Set or other preschool day care programs in your community. See if you can volunteer to help at one of these facilities for about three weeks. Try to become aware of the different talents, potentials, and disabilities (if any) of the children you're working with. When you feel you've located a "problem" child, talk with your supervisor about your observations. See if, together, you can plan a program of intervention--a way of relating to this child that might help to shape his or her destiny in a more positive direction. Keep a journal of your daily experiences, observations, and insights. At the end of three weeks, write a summary report of your findings, successes, and failures. Then decide if you want to continue your volunteer work.

Wisdom Interviews

Interview any <u>three</u> of the following people: (a) your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, step-parents, or guardians (b) an elderly person in your

neighborhood, (c) the oldest policeman in your precinct; (d) the oldest teacher in your school, (e) a minister, rabbi, or priest.

Make up a questionnaire that will help you to get to know these people better (their past, their accomplishments, their likes and dislikes, etc.). Be sure to include in your list of questions ones that will allow the people to share the wisdom they have acquired about such topics as families, friends, love, marriage, politics, nature, success, happiness, the purpose of life, and God. Your report should include the questionnaire, the answers you received, and an essay in which you summarize and reflect upon your findings.

Over the years, as spin-offs from our Hamlet unit, I've seen students address the suicide problem by volunteering for crisis counseling hotlines, pursue their indignation at social injustices by working in political campaigns and helping street people, and "take arms against a sea of troubles" by becoming conscious change-agents in their own troubled families.

No One-Way Ladders

Ladders are of course bi-directional, and the one presented here is no different (see Figure 1). It can be used inductively: moving from the student's experience...through the literary work...to involvement with both the local community and the community of ideas, but it can also be used deductively: moving from discussions of the cornerstone principles...through teacher-designed classroom and community projects...to works of literature, which in turn are used to help students understand their own interests and needs in the widest possible context. Clearly, we have to begin with the inductive approach, but once we reach the "top" of our first unit and students have a better

understanding of the cornerstone principles, we can begin the next unit with discussions and activities related to one of the principles (or a theme it inspires) and work our way down.

For years I taught two back-to-back units on Love and Destiny in this manner. I began the Love unit with media artifacts and roleplays about teen dating, problem marriages, and divorce...moved into a discussion of mature versus romantic love in excerpts from Romeo and Juliet ...did a careful reading and comparison of Summer of My German Soldier and Our Town...and culminated with a variety of "Love Projects," all calculated to have students focus on improving their relationships with peers and family members. With interest in "star-crossed" and God-blessed lovers still high, it was easy to begin the next unit with some rather heady, abstract discussions of Destiny... debating the apparent "inevitability" of some social problems ...defining terms such as "accident" and "coincidence"--all as prelude to a close reading of The Bridge of San Luis Rey (with its "coincidental" emphasis on Love). The novel in turn was used as a springboard for career projects in which students were able to explore how they could shape (or cooperate with) their own destinies through self-examination, research, and field trips.

Perhaps this inductive-deductive movement is what Dewey had in mind when he described the relationship between the child and the curriculum as "two limits which define a single process."69 Maybe, too that explains why in Jacob's dream of the heavenly ladder the angels of God are seen both "ascending and descending

on it."70 In any case, the more prosaic ladder described here does provide a structure and rationale for organizing individual units of literature that both touch students' lives and encourage a more conscious approach to character-building in the English classroom.

The ladder also suggests a possible thematic scope and sequence for a complete literature curriculum, both within and between grade levels. Thus, in grade 7 students could take a multi-faceted view of the Design principle; in grade 8, the Authority principle; in grade 9, Conscience; grade 10, Love; grade 11, Power; grade 12, Destiny and Wisdom. Within each grade level, too, the central theme could be examined in the light of each of the other principles. For example, when studying Design, one unit might focus on literature depicting different family patterns (Design under the aspect of Authority), another on different moral dilemmas involving friends (Design under the aspect of Conscience), and so on. Presented in this way, the cornerstone principles would generate a kind of "spiral curriculum" of morally educative units,71 each year adding to the students' understanding of important social and ethical values.

We often say that Hamlet and other classics are "timeless," and that's true, but it's primarily these underlying principles of thought and action that are universal, not the manuscripts in toto, with their often difficult cargoes of syntax, diction, and allusion. We teach these literary and linguistic aspects, of course--we seek inventive ways to make them accessible--but, more

important, we try to help students see the unique way in which Hamlet, or any other work, speaks to the circumstances of their own lives, and we provide opportunities for them, both in the classroom and the community, to try out and adopt constructive, life-affirming approaches to problems that concern them.

Like Jacob, our students will have no easy time in their quest for character. Year after year, we can engage them in a "vital and personal experiencing" of literature,72 we can ask questions that require them to come to grips with some universal principles of character, and we can motivate them toward an active involvement in solving personal and community problems, but we have to recognize that character development is a life-long process, and that there are more key factors outside the classroom than in it. Nevertheless, as English teachers our efforts can be unique and formative, and who knows if one day, like Jacob "leaning on his staff,"73 some of our students might not look back over the hills and valleys (and bridges and ladders) of their lives and thank us for helping them become men and women of character.

APPENDIX A

THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LADDER: IDENTIFICATION, INTERACTION, AND INVOLVEMENT

Writers in the field of moral education are generally agreed that the mark of a man or woman of character is the ability to put oneself in another's shoes--to identify emotionally with the needs and interests of others, to be sensitive to the effect of one's words and actions upon them, and to become actively involved in meeting their needs.74 Morality, say Hersh, Miller, and Fielding is "an uncompromising sense that other people matter," and they posit three stages of character development: caring, judging, and acting.75

Caring involves an individual's "intellectual ability to assume the perspective of his fellows," and judging is a "reasoned interaction or engagement with the conflicting interests and principles involved in a moral dilemma." However, to be morally educative, the end result of one's caring and judging must involve acting. "Without opportunities for action, and reflection on action, it is difficult for moral development to take place."76

Different writers have used different terminology, but there does appear to be a basic three-step progression in character growth, "from an egocentric through a societal to a universal perspective."77 In Fred Neuman's social action model, for example, three areas of "environmental competence" typify the moral point of view: (1) physical competence--the ability to have an impact on objects, (2) interpersonal competence--the ability to have an impact on people, and (3) civic competence--the ability to have an impact on public affairs.78

The progression used in this paper--identification, interaction, and involvement--is not new,79 but the terms are more descriptive of what actually occurs in the English classroom. Furthermore, when meshed with Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia's taxonomy of educational objectives for the affective domain,80 the proposed "Jacob's Ladder" (Figure 1) becomes a very useful tool for setting goals, choosing methods, and developing materials for a character-building program in English.

The following taxonomy is presented, therefore, not as a definitive description of such a program, but as a starting-point and guide for curriculum development and research. As teachers use it, the sections labeled "Sample English Objective" and "Appropriate Materials/Methods" will grow, and a classroom-tested curricular scope and sequence can be more precisely established. Even then, such taxonomies cannot be slavishly followed and must always yield to the unique configuration of student need and teacher judgment in any given class.

Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives for the Affective Domain: Condensed and Adapted for a Character-Building Curriculum in English81

PHASE I: IDENTIFICATION

In this phase of character-building, teachers (a) provide opportunities for students to become aware of a challenging character, problem, or topic, (b) encourage and facilitate student empathy with people involved in a moral conflict or dilemma, and (c) ask students to express, verbally and in writing, their thoughts and feelings about such people and problems.

1.0 RECEIVING (ATTENDING)

At this level teachers are concerned that the learner become aware of certain people, problems, or topics. This category of response is divided into three sub-categories and represents a learning continuum: from an extremely passive position, where the sole responsibility for the evocation of behavior rests with the teacher, to a point where the learner directs his or her attention voluntarily toward the topic at hand.

1.1 AWARENESS

Given appropriate opportunity, students will observe, become aware of, or take into account a situation, phenomenon, object, or state of affairs.

Sample English Objective: Students will develop an awareness of people, problems, and settings similar to ones they will meet in selected literary works.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: media artifacts (articles, photographs, advertisements, etc.)

1.2 WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE

Students are willing to take notice of a phenomenon and to give it their attention. Students show a greater tolerance and appreciation for the object, situation, or person.

Sample English Objective: Students will develop an increased tolerance for thinking and speaking

about individuals from other religious, social, political, economic, and national groups.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: teacher-made or published case-studies

1.3. CONTROLLED OR SELECTED ATTENTION

Students select and attend to the original teacher-given learning focus despite competing and distracting stimuli.

Sample English Objective: Students develop an interest in analyzing causes and motivations involved in a complex, morally challenging situation.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: individual brainstorming (jot-listing) and voluntary sharing with larger group

2.0 RESPONDING

Responses at this level go beyond merely attending to teacher-selected artifacts. Students are sufficiently motivated that they are not just willing to attend (1.2); they are actively attending. As a first stage in a "learning by doing" process, students commit themselves in some small measure to the topic being studied. Increasingly, they will seek it out and gain satisfaction from working with it or engaging in it during reading, writing, and speaking activities.

2.1 ACQUIESCENCE IN RESPONDING

This is the lowest level of response. Students comply with the demands of the activity but may not have fully accepted the need for doing so. Nevertheless, they have moved beyond mere awareness and interest to a more active response.

Sample English Objective: Students will imagine and communicate, verbally and in writing, the thoughts and words of people involved in a personal or social problem.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: written monologues

2.2. WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND

The element of resistance or of yielding unwillingly, which is possibly present at the previous level, is here replaced by a clearly voluntary choice.

Sample English Objective: Students will show a sustained willingness to imagine, analyze, and communicate about the artifacts and personal or social problem being examined.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: journal writing (students write and share what they imagine people in the situation being studied might write)

2.3 SATISFACTION IN RESPONSE

In addition to responding voluntarily, the students at this level exhibit an emotional response, generally of pleasure, zest, or enjoyment. Such positive feelings are not absent from earlier levels in the response continuum, but they are an especially important component of the objectives at this level.

Sample English Objective: Students will exhibit spontaneity and enthusiasm while participating in problem-solving activities related to people and situations they have been studying.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: whole-class brainstorming (students generate possible solutions for problems being studied)

PHASE II: INTERACTION

In Phase II of the character-building ascent (see Figure 1), teachers focus on: (a) structuring student-student interactions, (b) helping students to identify and define moral issues, (c) encouraging the use of reasoned discourse during discussions of controversial topics, and (d) facilitating students' interaction with literature.

3.0 VALUING

At this level students' responses are not only voluntary and positive, but they show enough consistency that they may be perceived as valuing the

activity or materials. An important element of behavior at this level is that students are motivated not by the desire to comply or obey, but by commitment to the underlying value of the materials or activities of the learning sequence. The objectives classified here are also central to the development of individual conscience and, in turn, the active control of behavior.

3.1 ACCEPTANCE OF A VALUE

At this level, students are willing to express beliefs and are perceived by others as holding certain values.

Sample English Objective: Students will verbalize and defend their opinions and recommendations about a personal or social problem.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: case study conferences

3.2 PREFERENCE FOR A VALUE

Behavior at this level implies not just the acceptance of a value to the point of being willing to be identified with it, but the individual is sufficiently committed to the value to pursue it, to seek it out, to want it.

Sample English Objective: Students will deliberately examine a variety of viewpoints on controversial issues with a view to forming opinions about them.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: Simulations, sociodramas, and roleplays

3.3 COMMITMENT

At this level, a person is clearly perceived as holding a particular value. He or she acts to further the thing valued in some way, to extend the possibility of developing it, to deepen involvement with it, and to convince others of its worth. Loyalty to a position, group, or cause is evident at this level, and there is a strong need to act on that commitment.

Sample English Objective: Students will have

opportunities to present and debate their views on the personal or social problems being studied.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: buzz groups, debates, panels, class discussions of literary works

PHASE III: INVOLVEMENT (A and B)

In Phase III of the character-development progression, students are encouraged to act on their beliefs and commitments, first within the confines of the school, and then through volunteer experiences in the larger community.

4.0 ORGANIZATION (Involvement "A")

At this level of response, students begin to understand more clearly how their ideas and opinions about a specific unit of study are related to other values they hold. They begin to organize their beliefs into an ethical system.

4.1 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF A VALUE

Students begin to go beyond specific units of study to make value generalizations. They begin to deal more abstractly with the problems studied in a particular unit.

Sample English Objective: Students will apply beliefs developed during the study of a literary work to related situations in the school and larger community.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: Media artifacts, documentary films

4.2 ORGANIZATION OF A VALUE SYSTEM

At this level students are challenged to order and prioritize their disparate values about a particular personal or social problem.

Sample English Objective: Students will investigate and evaluate alternative courses of action for dealing with a personal or social problem.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: Resource speakers, school- or library-based research

5.0 CHARACTERIZATION BY A VALUE OR VALUE COMPLEX (Involvement "B")

At this level of response, students' values are organized into some kind of internally consistent system and are clearly indicated by their behavior. They are attempting to integrate their beliefs, ideas, and attitudes into a total philosophy or world view.

5.1 GENERALIZED SET

A generalized set is a basic orientation which enables individuals to reduce and order the complex world about them and to act effectively and consistently in it. Students at this level demonstrate a predisposition to act in a certain way in accordance with their system of beliefs and values.

Sample English Objective: Students will be given opportunities to validate and apply their beliefs through projects in the larger community.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: Field trips, interviews (outside of school)

5.2 CHARACTERIZATION

At this level of response, students are encouraged to pursue the broadest educational objectives--ones related to developing a view of the universe or a philosophy of life based on ethical principles consistent with democratic ideals.

Sample English Objective: Students will conduct an original research project--one which involves some limited community service--in order to clarify or validate their stated beliefs about a personal or social problem.

Appropriate Materials/Methods: Investigative reports, volunteer work in community

APPENDIX B

THE CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES

The cornerstone principles and their definitions follow, along with the primary developmental tasks which undergird them, moral applications, related character traits, and examples of the types of literary themes and follow-up activities they can generate.

The "Sample Community Connections" for each principle are developed in some detail to indicate the importance of providing students with opportunities to put into practice some of the moral concepts and ethical convictions which the literature curriculum has been presenting and clarifying for them. The five "connections" for each principle are usually given in this order: (1) Observation and Journal Writing, (2) Library or Community Research, (3) Interviewing, (4) Experimenting, and (5) Volunteer Work. Like the pre-reading (identification) methods (see Figure 1), these post-reading projects follow a progression from highly individualized and non-threatening to highly interactive and challenging activities.

The Cornerstone Principles: A Closer Look

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1. DESIGN

   a. Definition:

      All individuals, organisms, and objects have an intrinsic and optimal order essential to their proper functioning.

   b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks (Havighurst):

      (1) Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively
      (2) Achieving a mature self-image

   c. Moral Application

      Circumstances and forces beyond our control have built unchangeable givens into the life of each individual. Learning to understand, accept, and respect such givens in oneself and others is a mark of moral maturity.

d. Related Character Traits

(1) Self-acceptance
(2) Empathy
(3) Respect for others
(4) Respect for Nature
(5) Respect for ideas about God
(6) Humility

e. Some Related Literary Themes and Topics:

(1) Personal Identity
(2) Roots--Family Genealogy
(3) Sports Biographies
(4) Handicapped People
(5) The Force of Nature
(6) In the Beginning
(7) The Bible as Literature

f. Sample Questions:

(1) What are the unchanging (or unchangeable) givens of the characters, conflict, and setting?
(2) Are the characters in this story whole or complete: physically? emotionally? intellectually? socially? spiritually?
(3) What are the unchanging or unchangeable givens of <u>your</u> life? How do you deal with them? What are some positive ways in which other people deal with them?

g. Sample Community Connections:

(1) <u>Journal-keeping: The Journal of Design</u>

Week #1: A Closer Look at Things

Each day try to become aware of how different things are made. Take note of the patterns, textures, and shapes of objects, both man-made and natural. Describe these objects as precisely as possible in your journal. Then answer these KEY QUESTIONS: Who made this thing? How did it get to be this way? What processes or intelligence shaped it? What can I learn about myself by studying this object closely?

Week #2: A Closer Look at People

Each day describe fully one person who

catches your eye for some reason. Describe their overall appearance and posture, their clothing, face, and mannerisms. Then answer these KEY QUESTIONS: What parts of this person's appearance or physical abilities could he or she change? What parts are unchangeable? What can I learn about people by studying this person closely? What can I learn about myself?

Week #3: A Closer Look at Myself

Each day describe a different aspect of your own life; for example: (a) My Physical Appearance, (b) My Family, (c) My Neighborhood, (d) My Friends, (e) My Hobbies, (f) My Special Personal Possessions, (g) My Beliefs and Convictions. KEY QUESTIONS: Which of these things can be changed? Which cannot be changed? Which ones do I <u>want</u> to change? Why? Which ones do I hope <u>never</u> change? Why?

(2) <u>Research</u>

To take a closer look at the ongoing debate between creationists and evolutionists, read at least three articles by each of two leading scientists in the debate. In current volumes of <u>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</u>, find articles by Stephen Jay Gould (an evolutionist) and Duane T. Gish (a creationist). Summarize the main points of each article. Then decide which author has presented the stronger argument and write an essay explaining your opinion.

(3) <u>Interviewing</u>

Develop a questionnaire about the causes and treatment of broken homes, emotional breakdowns, and drug abuse. Visit a social worker, psychologist, school counselor, and minister, rabbi, or priest. Ask each of them the same questions and see if you can discover similarities in how they try to help people whose lives have "fallen apart." Summarize your findings in a report to the class, and see if your classmates' experiences support your conclusions.

(4) Experiment

If possible (that is, if it is agreeable to all the parents or guardians involved), see if you can "trade" families with a close friend for part of a weekend (from Saturday before dinner until Sunday after dinner might be a good time period). Keep a journal in which you record similarities and differences between the "design" of your friend's family and your own. Consider such things as number of people in the family; your birth order in your "new" family; habits, routines, and traditions the family is accustomed to; their typical menu for each meal, and the "pecking order" or authority structure of the family. At the end of the experiment, write an essay in which you summarize the high points of your experience and your feelings and thoughts about it.

(5) Volunteer Work

Find out what tutoring opportunities exist in your school or district. See if you can get involved in helping a grade-school student or recent immigrant to improve their academic skills. Keep a journal of your experiences and tell how they have affected (a) your own academic skills and attitudes, (b) your understanding of your talents and interests in the area of teaching and/or helping others, and (c) the "design" or direction of your student's life.

2. AUTHORITY

a. Definition:

In nature and society there are levels of authority which influence the behavior of people and things under their control

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks:

(1) Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
(2) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior
(3) Acquiring an ethical system as a guide to behavior

c. Moral Application

Learning to submit, appeal, or relate to the authorities in our lives is an important requisite for moral maturity and personal fulfillment.

d. Related Character Traits

(1) Respect for authority
(2) Obedience to laws
(3) Deference
(4) Flexibility
(5) Cooperation

e. Some Related Literary Themes and Topics:

(1) The Family
(2) School Days
(3) Nonconformists
(4) Kings, Queens, and Leaders
(5) Courtroom Drama

f. Sample Questions:

(1) Do some of the characters in this work have more authority than others? Who is in charge here? Who is the "low man on the totem pole"? What is the "pecking order"?
(2) How are conflicts with authority managed or resolved?
(3) Who or what are the authorities in <u>your</u> life? How do you respond to them? How do you handle any conflicts with them?

g. Sample Community Connections

(1) <u>Journal</u>

Each day for three weeks, keep a record of the various rules and regulations you voluntarily followed or obeyed. Record, too, the times when you felt like ignoring or disobeying certain rules, laws, or authorities. If you did, in fact, disobey or ignore a rule or person in authority, describe the incident and any consequences you experienced. At the end of three weeks, study your journal carefully; then answer these questions: (a) What or who are the chief authorities in your life? What or who are the sources of the different rules, laws, or guidelines you follow? (b) With which

authorities in your life do you have the least problem cooperating? Why? (c) With which authorities do you have the most problems cooperating? Why? (d) What consequences of disobedience have you experienced? How have those experiences changed your behavior? (e) What consequences of obedience have you experienced?

(2) Community Research

Make an informal survey of the major problems in your community (for example: pollution, homelessness, neglect of the elderly, vandalism, divorce, drug abuse, etc.). Consult police officials, social workers, and reference librarians for pertinent statistics and insights. Do an analysis of the possible causes of these problems. Determine how many of them are caused by a failure to respect the rule of law...disobedience to people in authority...or violations of the unwritten moral code of the community. Summarize your findings in an essay and share them with your classmates. See if they agree with your analysis. Then brainstorm for ways to help solve these problems, noting specific things teenagers can do.

(3) Interviewing

Identify three students you know who seem to get along with parents or teachers and three who don't. Interview each and see if you can discover what attitudes and behaviors contribute to successful relationships with the authorities in a person's life and which do not. Pay special attention to how these people deal with conflicts between themselves and those in authority over them. Summarize your findings in a report and share them with your classmates.

(4) Experiment

In several places, the Bible promises good success, prosperity, and long life for the children who respect, honor, and obey their parents (or the chief authority figures in their lives).82 For three weeks, without telling your parents or guardians (or anyone else in your family) what you're doing, make a conscious effort to be super-obedient and respectful to your parents or guardians and especially

cooperative and helpful with everyone else in your household. Keep a journal of what you do, how you feel, and what you are thinking, and record as well the consequences of your behavior. At the end of three weeks, write an essay in which you summarize what you have learned about your family, yourself, and obedience.

(5) Volunteer Work

Ask someone in authority over you in your school (the vice principal or principal, for example), if there is some project that needs attention in the school. Tell them you're available at least two hours a week for three weeks. (Perhaps they could use your help in the office or bookroom.) Try to be ready to accept any assignment that is given to you, and be sure to find out the person to whom you are going to be responsible. Keep a journal of your experiences, and at the end of the three weeks write a summary essay in which you tell what you did, what you learned, and whether your view of authority has changed in any way.

3. CONSCIENCE

a. Definition:

People have the unique potential for exercising moral judgment; they have, and can develop further, a sense of right and wrong that can keep them from violating ethical principles and moral laws.

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks:

(1) Achieving more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
(2) Using the body effectively
(3) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior
(4) Acquiring a set of values an ethical system

c. Moral Application

Each individual is responsible for the personal and social consequences of his/her thoughts, words, and actions.

d. Related Character Traits

(1) Honesty and Integrity
(2) Social concern
(3) Responsibility
(4) Justice

e. Some Related Literary Themes:

(1) Loyalty
(2) Honesty
(3) Drug Abuse
(4) Prejudice
(5) The Elderly

f. Sample Questions:

(1) Do any of the characters in this story worry about the morality of their thoughts or deeds?
(2) Do any of the characters seem to lack a conscience? What effect does that have on other characters?
(3) Do you ever wonder if some things are right or wrong? How do you deal with such questions?

g. Sample Community Connections

(1) Research

Read any one of the following pieces of literature. Keep a "Response Journal" in which you record instances of characters struggling with matters of conscience.

KEY QUESTIONS to ask yourself include: Are any of the characters feeling guilty about some past event? Is their conscience urging them to say or do something about a present problem? Are they failing to do something because of fear of future criticism? Do questions of right and wrong figure largely in the characters' thinking, the author's comments, or your own responses?

Literary selections:

(a). All My Sons by Arthur Miller (a drama about a business man who sells defective plane parts to the government and loses his own

son, an Air Force pilot, in a fatal crash);

(b). The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne (a novel about a 17th century Puritan woman, her illegitimate child, and the town minister);

(c). Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose (a drama about a jury deliberating the fate of a Puerto Rican teenager;

(d). A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (a classic novella about the miser Scrooge and the reawakening of a hardened conscience);

(e). Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck (a novel about mercy killing, involving a retarded ranchworker and his protective friend).

(2) Journal/Observation Log

Make a list of "wrongs" (injustices, hurtful relationships, unusual patterns of behavior) that you see: (a) in your family, (b) among your friends, and (c) at school. Choose one problem that concerns you most from each of the areas. Think about ways that you can be a "conscience" in each situation--things you can say or do that might motivate others to adopt more constructive attitudes or behaviors. Each day try to do or say at least one positive thing in each of the situations. Keep a journal in which you record the results of your efforts to act in good conscience or to be the voice of conscience in each situation. After three weeks write a summary essay in which you discuss the positive and negative aspects of being a social conscience.

(3) Interviewing

Interview the editorial editor of one or two local newspapers. Ask them if they see themselves as the "conscience" of the community. Ask them to explain what that phrase means to them and to give you examples of articles they've written which illustrate this idea. Get their ideas for how you can be the conscience of your school or community. Then summarize your interviews and findings in an essay

(4) Experiment

Get alone in a quiet place (your room when no one's home, perhaps, or a bench in a safe park, or the back pew of a local church or synagogue during an off-hour). Use this time to search your conscience. Ask yourself if there are any people you've offended or any wrongs you've committed that have to be set right. Make a list of the people with whom you have to clear your conscience. Then, thoughtfully (prayerfully, if you're given to prayer) approach each person and express your regret or sorrow over what you did (or failed to do). Ask them to forgive you and thank them when they do. Keep a journal in which you (a) record your thoughts and preparations before each interview, (b) summarize what happened during each interview, and (c) evaluate how your efforts have helped you and the other person and how your future relationship with them may be affected.

(5) Volunteer Work

Is your conscience tender toward the plight of the homeless, the elderly, the orphaned, or the retarded? With the help of your guidance counselor, make a list of institutions and agencies in your community that deal with such problems. With a friend or alone, decide to which group of people you would like to lend a helping hand. Arrange to be involved at least two hours a week for three months in one of the institutions or programs. Don't just "put in time" or settle for some impersonal work. Try to get involved with people, so that you're able to get to know them personally. Keep a journal of your experiences, observations, and insights. After three months, write an essay in which you summarize your findings and make recommendations on how to help people with such problems. If you decide to continue your volunteer work, see if you can get other students to join you.

4. LOVE

a. Definition:

A commitment to serve and, if necessary, sacrifice for another; an involvement which can have physical,

emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks:

(1) Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
(2) Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
(3) Preparing for family life
(4) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior

c. Moral Application

Recognizing human interdependency and the need for self-sacrifice is an important indicator of moral maturity.

d. Related Character Traits

(1) Discernment
(2) Sensitivity
(3) Service
(4) Loyalty
(5) Commitment
(6) Self-sacrifice

e. Some Related Literary Themes:

(1) Famous Friendships
(2) Romantic vs. Mature Love
(3) Broken Homes
(4) Sacrifices
(5) Patriots

f. Sample Questions:

(1) How many different kinds of love are shown in this story? Are there conflicts between these different types of love?
(2) What messages or ideas about love are communicated directly here? Indirectly? Do you agree or disagree with these views of love?
(3) If the situation in this story were multiplied a million times in this country, would our society be more or less loving?

g. Sample Community Connections:

(1) <u>The Love Journal</u>

One old song claims that "Love makes the world go 'round," while another declares that "What the world needs now is love, sweet love." To what extent do you see love in the world around you? Do you see examples of love in your home... neighborhood...school...community ...the mass media? To what extent does the world need love? Do you see people and problems that are crying out for love or a loving solution? Keep a daily record of your observations--examples both of love-in-action and of the need for love. After three weeks, write an essay in which you summarize your findings. Try to make a list of the different types of love you've observed and make some recommendations for how people can be more loving.

(2) Research

Develop a definition of love by reading at least three books and/or articles. (Good books to consult include: The Art of Loving by Eric Fromm, Becoming a Lover by Paul Cedar, Why Am I Afraid to Love? by John Powell, and Loving Each Other by Leo Buscaglia.) After completing the readings, summarize your findings in an essay. Then compare your own definition of love with the definition given in First Corinthians, chapter 13, in the Living Bible translation of the Bible. Discuss how you measure up to these definitions. Are you a loving person? How can you become more loving?

(3) Interviews

Interview at least 20 people (4, ages 5-11; 4, ages 12-17; 4, ages 20-30; 4, ages 31-50; 4, ages 65 and over). Ask them (a) to give their definition of love, (b) to describe the most loving person they've known, and (c) to tell about the most loving thing they've ever done for someone else. Summarize your findings first by age-groups, and then write an essay in which you tell how the responses of the age-groups are similar. Share your findings with your classmates and allow them to add their own remarks to the conclusions you've drawn.

(4) Experiment

How can you show love to someone you don't get along with or even like? If you want to

overcome such hostility or prejudice, you usually have to go through three stages: (a) Identification--trying to imagine how that person actually thinks and feels, (b) Association--making more prolonged contact with that person for the purpose of getting to know him or her better, and (c) Involvement--doing even more time-consuming things with that person (sharing special projects or events).

Keep a three-week journal in which each day you record what you've done to identify with the person you've chosen, to associate with him or her, and, finally, to get involved with them. Summarize your findings in an essay and continue your efforts even after the journal-keeping is over. Remember: bad relationships don't happen overnight; you can begin to improve or heal them in three weeks, but lasting improvement will take continued investment of good thoughts, positive contacts, and occasional deeper involvements.

(5) Volunteer Work

"What the world needs now is love, sweet love" is never so apparent as it is in orphanages, veterans' hospitals, and homes for the elderly. Find out where such institutions are located in your community and for at least three months become a regular visitor. Keep a journal of the loving things you say and do and how people respond to them. Keep track, too, of your own feelings and insights and how your volunteer efforts are affecting your relationships with family members and friends. Write an essay after three months in which you summarize your findings, or, if you have a special liking for poetry, write a series of poems that reflect the varied people you've met and the situations and emotions you've experienced.

5. POWER

a. Definition:

Inner strength (physical, emotional, or spiritual) or external influence (the capacity to give or withhold assistance or rewards)

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks:

(1) Using the body effectively
(2) Achieving assurance of economic independence
(3) Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for competence
(4) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system

c. Moral Application

Many problems, obstacles, and challenges in life can only be surmounted by relying on a power greater than oneself.

d. Related Character Traits:

(1) Diligence
(2) Determination
(3) Patience
(4) Courage
(5) Faith

e. Some Related Literary Themes:

(1) Profiles in Courage
(2) Achievement and Excellence
(3) World of Careers
(4) What Is Success?
(5) Conquering Faith

f. Sample Questions:

(1) Who or what are the dominant forces in this story? What is the source of their power or influence?
(2) Do any of the following kinds of power play an important part in this story: physical power? emotional strength? social force or pressure? spiritual power or influence?
(3) What power do <u>you</u> rely on most? Why?

g. Sample Community Connections:

(1) <u>Power Journal</u>

Each evening for two weeks, ask yourself, "What did I accomplish today?" Simply list the different projects you worked on or the different activities you engaged in (at home, in school, with your friends). Then decide which

of the following kinds of power you used for each of your accomplishments:

(a). physical strength
(b). intellectual ability
(c). will-power (determination)
(d). spiritual resources (faith, prayer)
(e). sacrifice/service/love motive (the desire to do something for someone else)

At the end of each week, study your journal entries and summarize your findings. What kinds of power do you rely on or use most? Why? What kinds of power do you think you should try to develop? Why?

(2) Library Research

Read any two of the following books and see how many different kinds of power (see #1 above) the main character in each story uses. Which kinds of power do they use most? How are the people in the two books alike in their use of power? How are they different? Would you have used power differently if you had been in their places? Why? Why not?

Book choices include:

(a). Night by Elie Wiesel
(b). Joni by Joni Eareckson
(c). Lilies of the Field by William Barrett
(d). The Miracle Worker by William Gibson
(e). The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

(3) Interviews / Letters

Using the list of five types of power (see #1 above), interview at least five people to see what kinds of power led to their greatest accomplishments. People to be interviewed might include:

(a). parents
(b). grandparents
(c). school leaders
(d). local political leaders
(e). nationally famous people (in

politics, entertainment, sports, etc.); you will have to interview these by writing letters

Write a summary essay telling how different people have used the different types of power to achieve important goals in life.

(4) Experiment Log

Set a three-week goal for yourself during which time you hope to accomplish something important to you; for example:

(a). breaking a bad habit
(b). learning a new skill (in music, for example, or athletics, math, English, etc.)
(c). becoming a better (choose one): brother, sister, son, daughter, or friend

Keep a record each day of what you do to achieve your goal. Note what kinds of power you use each day to get closer to your goal (see list of powers under #1 above). At the end of the three weeks, read over your Experiment Log and write a summary report of your progress as well as a plan for continuing your efforts to reach your goal or, if you've reached it, to strengthen and extend your accomplishment.

(5) Volunteer Work

See if you can volunteer your services at a rehabilitation center or the physical therapy department of a local hospital. Try to get to know the professional workers and their clients and begin keeping a journal of your experiences. Identify two or three people whose progress you want to observe more closely. After a month or so (if you feel you have developed a friendship with these people) interview them informally and see if you can determine what kinds of power they are drawing on to make whatever progress they are making. Write a summary essay of your findings and decide whether you will continue as a volunteer at that site.

6. **DESTINY**

a. Definition:

A necessary and inevitable succession of events usually attributed to forces beyond oneself

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks:

(1) Accepting one's physique
(2) Selecting and preparing for an occupation
(3) Preparing for family life
(4) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system

c. Moral Application

Morally mature individuals find purpose in living when they dedicate their time, talents, and resources to the achievement of goals that transcend their own lives.

d. Related Character Traits

(1) Contentment
(2) Decisiveness
(3) Endurance
(4) Orderliness
(5) Purposefulness
(6) Confidence

e. Some Related Literary Themes:

(1) Surprise Endings
(2) Free Will vs. Fate
(3) Rich Man, Poor Man
(4) Historical Fiction
(5) Survivors

f. Sample Questions:

(1) Does the succession of events in this story seem inevitable? Are the conflicts which the characters experience unavoidable?
(2) Do the characters ever sense some larger forces--either positive or negative--operating in their lives? What do they say or do about that?
(3) Do you think each person has a special destiny to fulfill? What might yours be?

g. Sample Community Connections:

(1) Journal / Personal Observations

For the next three weeks, keep your eyes and ears open for the following words and phrases:

--DESTINY
--PROVIDENCE
--FATE
--HIGHER POWER
--HIGHER AUTHORITY
--AN ACT OF GOD
--IT'S GOD'S WILL
--IT (WAS or WASN'T) MEANT TO BE

Editorials, letters to the editor, and "Dear Abby"-type columns in the newspaper are particularly good places to look, as well as interviews with famous people in national weekly magazines. Your most frequent and interesting source, though, should be the conversations you participate in or overhear at home, at school, and on public transportation.

Record your findings in a journal, and at the end of three weeks write an essay in which you summarize what you've learned about people's ideas about destiny--the notion that their lives are being influenced or controlled by a power greater than their own will.

(2) Library Research

Choose any one of the following topics or books for a deeper look at the idea of Destiny:

(a). "Predestination vs. Free Will": Explore this long-standing philosophical debate by reading a related encyclopedia article...interviewing a minister, a priest, and a rabbi...and reading an article or book about John Calvin, a sixteenth century believer in predestination.

(b). "Manifest Destiny": This was widely used motto in the United States during the 1800's. Explore this historical movement by reading a related

encyclopedia article...interviewing two history teachers...and reading O Pioneers! or My Antonia by Willa Cather.

(c). The Bridge of San Luis Rey by Thornton Wilder is a novel about five people who die in a bridge collapse and the efforts of one man to find out if their deaths were a matter of chance or destiny.

(d). Oedipus Rex by Sophocles, is an ancient Greek drama about a man who, at birth, was prophesied to murder his father and marry his own mother, and how he attempts to escape his destiny.

(e). Our Town, a play by Thornton Wilder, depicts the commonplace lives of two typical small-town families against a backdrop of cosmic destiny and divine providence.

(f). The Gospel of Luke in the Bible relates the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, whose lives were defined by prophecies given before their births and lived out with an overwhelming sense of destiny.

(g). Other Biblical stories (choose any two): Abraham (Genesis, chapters 12-22; Moses (Exodus, chapters 1-15); Gideon (Judges, chapters 6-8); Samson (Judges, chapters 13-16). Compare and contrast how these men's lives were shaped by prophecy and ruled by the force of destiny.

(3) Interviews

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I
...took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

FROM "The Road Not Taken"
by Robert Frost

Life is full of choices and, once made, they often lock us unto what seems to be our destiny.

Interview any <u>three</u> of the following people to see if they have experienced a sense of destiny about choices they have made:

(a). Parents, grandparents, teachers, ministers--about their choice of marriage partners or careers;
(b). Friends at other schools;
(c). Older brothers and sisters--about the advantages and disadvantages of their birth order in the family

Your goal in the interviews is to determine if the people you talk to have ever felt that their lives are being directed or influenced by a force or power greater than themselves.

(4) <u>Experiment Log</u>

Identify three career possibilities for your future. Ask your guidance counselor for help in contacting companies or individuals already involved in the kinds of work you've chosen. See if you can arrange week-long (part-time, after-school) visits to each job site. Keep a log of your daily observations and experiences while making the visits. At the end of three weeks, see if you have eliminated any of the jobs as possible career choices. See if you've developed a stronger interest in any of them. Then answer this question: In what ways have your visits helped to shape or determine your destiny?

(5) <u>Volunteer Work</u>

Ask your counselor for help in locating Get-Set or other preschool day care programs in your community. See if you can volunteer to help at one of these facilities for about three weeks. Try to become aware of the different talents, potentials, and disabilities (if any) of the children you're working with. When you feel you've located a "problem" child, talk with your supervisor about your observations. See if, together, you can plan a program of intervention--a way of relating to this child that might help to shape his

or her destiny in a more positive direction. Keep a journal of your daily experiences, observations, and insights. At the end of three weeks, write a summary report of your findings, successes, and failures. Then decide whether you want to continue your volunteer work.

7. WISDOM

a. Definition:

The ability to judge rightly based on a broad range of experience, knowledge, and understanding of the basic principles of living

b. Most Relevant Developmental Tasks:

(1) Achieving a mature self-image
(2) Developing intellectual skills and concepts
(3) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system

c. Moral Application

The mature person understands, cherishes, and applies universal moral principals and respects his/her moral heritage.

d. Some Related Character Traits:

(1) Farsightedness
(2) Interdependence
(3) Acceptance
(4) Prudence
(5) Moderation
(6) Trust
(7) Love

e. Some Related Literary Themes:

(1) Famous Journeys
(2) Acres of Diamonds
(3) Wisdom and Suffering
(4) Great Biographies
(5) Search for Meaning

f. Sample Questions:

(1) Do the main characters in this story mature or grow in important ways? How?
(2) What are the most important lessons these

characters have learned?
(3) If you had to list the top three things you've learned about life so far, what would they be ?
(4) What is wisdom, and where can you get it?

g. Sample Community Connections:

(1) Journal of Wisdom

Choose one or more of the following topics that interest you. Then, each day for at least three weeks, record your observations and insights. See how much wisdom you can gather about your topic:

(a). Successful Students (what makes them successful; how they think, talk, behave);
(b). Do's and Don'ts of Family Living (how to be successful in your family);
(c). Do's and Don'ts of Friendship (how to succeed with your friends);
(d). Wisdom of My Teachers (wise sayings and philosophical comments made by your school teachers or other people, living or dead, whose wisdom has inspired and guided you);
(e). Lessons from Nature (sometimes we get wisdom by observing inanimate objects, such as clouds and trees, or animals, especially pets).

(2) Library Research

Choose one of the following projects:

(a). The Book of Proverbs in the Bible has much to say about wisdom and its opposite--foolishness. Read the Book of Proverbs and keep two lists: one that shows the characteristics of a wise person and the other that lists the traits of a fool. At the end of your reading, compare yourself to each of the two lists and write a summary essay explaining how wise or foolish you are according to the Book of Proverbs.

(b). Ask the librarian for a book of wise saying (such as Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac, The Sayings of the Fathers (from the Jewish Talmud), or

Bartlett's Dictionary of Familiar Quotations).

Make a personal "dictionary" of your favorite quotations or wise sayings related to such topics as Friends, Parents, Love, Money, and Success. Then add at least five wise statements of your own about each of the topics.

(3) Interviews

Interview any three of the following people:

(a). your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents;
(b). an elderly person in your neighborhood;
(c). the oldest policeman in your precinct;
(d). the oldest teacher in your school;
(e). a minister, rabbi, or priest.

Make up a questionnaire that will help you to get to know these people better (their past, their accomplishments, their likes and dislikes, etc.). Be sure to include in your list of questions ones that will allow the people to share the wisdom they have acquired about such topics as families, friends, love, marriage, politics, nature, success, happiness, the purpose of life, and God.

(4) An Experiment: Wisdom vs. Foolishness

For three weeks keep a notebook in which every day you do two things: (a) record examples of foolish or wise talk and behavior you've observed, and (b) keep a record of foolish and wise choices you've made. At the end of three weeks, write an essay in which you summarize your findings: the main kinds of foolishness and wisdom you've observed, and your own progress in learning to make wise choices.

(5) Volunteer Work

Unlike the interview projects, these activities require long-term commitments. Plan to spend at least two hours per week for at least three months volunteering your help

or attending meetings. Choose <u>one</u> of the following projects:

(a). Contact the Director of Volunteers at a home for the elderly. Help is usually needed to wheel people outdoors and during the dinner hour (often from 4:00 to 5:00). Try to cultivate friendships with different residents. Keep a journal of your experiences and record the wise sayings and insights which your new acquaintances share with you.

(b). See if you can locate the headquarters for a crisis hotline in your community. Volunteer your services, or simply ask to be able to observe what goes on there. Even if you can only do clerical work, you will be able to get a good understanding of the kinds of crises that are handled there and the counseling approaches which are used. Keep a journal of your experiences and observations. Make special note of what you consider to be wise approaches to difficult situations.

(c). Attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous or Al-anon. Become familiar with their "Twelve Steps" program and keep a record of the highlights of each meeting. Make note of what you consider to be wise approaches to the problems aired and record your own opinions about the "Twelve Steps" philosophy of dealing with alcohol and drug addiction. At the end of three months, write an essay in which you apply what you've learned to your own life.

ENDNOTES

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57. Hersh, Miller, and Fielding, p.123.

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59. Raths lists ten "value-rich areas": (1) money, (2) friendship, (3) love and sex, (4) religion and morals, (5) leisure, (6) politics and social organization, (7) work, (8) family, (9) maturity, and (10) character traits (Raths, Harmin, Simon, p.260), while Kohlberg notes "ten universal moral values or issues of concern," including: (1) punishment, (2) property, (3) roles and concerns of affection, (4) roles and concerns of authority, (5) law, (6) life, (7) liberty, (8) distributive justice, (9) truth, and (10) sex. (Kohlberg, "The Cognitive-Developmental Approach," in Purpel and Ryan, p. 180.)

60. The author is personally grateful to the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Oak Brook, Illinois, for the many insights on character development gained through the Institute's seminars and materials. The "Cornerstone Principles" being developed here,

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